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What is claimed is:

SMB
1 1 A method for conducting electronic commerce through a computer network, the
method comprising:
3 receiving, in a merchant computer system of the computer network, a purchase
4 request for a digital product;
5 receiving payment data in the merchant system wherein the payment data specifies
6 remuneration for the digital product;
7 requesting reservation of the digital product from a content manager computer
8 system which can be different from the merchant computer system and which is coupled to
9 the content manager computer system through the computer network;
10 receiving, in the content manager computer system, a delivery request signal from
11 the merchant computer system wherein the delivery request signal requests delivery of the
12 digital product to a client computer system through the computer network;
13 sending transaction identification data to the client computer system wherein the
14 transaction identification data identifies the digital product and represents remuneration in
15 accordance with the payment data;
16 receiving, in a delivery computer system of the computer network, the transaction
17 identification data from the client computer system;
18 determining within the delivery computer system, in accordance with the
19 transaction identification data, the digital product; and
20 sending, from the delivery computer system, the digital product to the client
21 computer system.

1 2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 sending, from the delivery computer system to the content manager computer
3 system, a signal indicating that sending the digital product to the client computer system is

4 completed.

1 3. The method of Claim 2 further comprising:
2 recording, by the content manager computer system, purchase data identifying the
3 digital product and indicating that the digital product was purchased.

1 4. The method of Claim 3 further comprising:
2 sending, by the content manager computer system, the purchase data to a media
3 licensing computer system such that the media licensing computer system can apportion
4 compensation for sales of the digital product.

5 5. The method of Claim 4 further comprising:
6 aggregating purchase data from the content manager computer system and other
7 purchase data from one or more other content manager computer systems to form
8 aggregated purchase data; and
9 sending the aggregated purchase data to a rights agent computer system such that
0 the rights agent computer system can apportion compensation for sales of the digital
1 product.

2 6. The method of Claim 3 wherein recording the purchase data comprises:
3 encrypting the purchase data in such a manner that data held secret by the media
4 licensing computer system is required for decrypting the purchase data.

1 7. The method of Claim 6 wherein encrypting the purchase data is performed in such
2 a manner that modification of the purchase data subsequent to the encrypting can be detected.

1 8. The method of Claim 6 wherein encrypting the purchase data is performed in such
2 a manner that removal of the purchase data from a sequence of purchase data records subsequent

3 to the encrypting can be detected.

1 9. The method of Claim 1 wherein sending the digital product from the delivery
2 computer system to the client computer system comprises:
3 creating a new encryption key which is intended to be used only once;
4 encrypting the digital product with the new encryption key to form an encrypted
5 digital product;
6 sending the encrypted digital product to the client computer system;
7 decrypting the encrypted digital product within the client computer system to
8 recover the digital product; and
9 discarding the new encryption key.

10. The method of Claim 1 wherein requesting reservation by the merchant computer
system comprises:
1 encrypting data representing a requested reservation;
2 sending the data as encrypted to the content manager computer system; and
3 decrypting the data within the content manager computer system.

11. The method of Claim 1 wherein, in response to requesting reservation by the
merchant computer system, the content manager computer system effects such a reservation of
3 the digital product by:
4 forming transaction data which include (i) the transaction identification data, (ii)
5 product identification data which identifies the digital product, and (iii) binding data which
6 binds the transaction to the client computer system; and
7 sending the transaction data to the merchant computer system.

12. The method of Claim 11 wherein sending the transaction identification data
2 comprises encrypting the transaction identification data.

1 13. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 sending, from the merchant computer system, the payment data to a payment
3 authority; and
4 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the payment authority, payment
5 authorization data.

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7 14. The method of Claim 13 further comprising:
8 sending the payment authorization data to the content manager computer system.

1 15 The method of Claim 14 wherein sending the payment authorization data
comprises:
2 encrypting the payment authorization data.

1 16. The method of Claim 14 further comprising:
2 recording, by the content manager computer system, that payment for the digital
3 product has been authorized.

1 17. The method of Claim 16 further comprising:
2 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the content manager computer
3 system, acknowledgment data which indicates that payment for the digital product has
4 been recorded.

1 18. The method of Claim 17 wherein the acknowledgment data includes the
2 transaction identification data and a payment authorization token which identifies payment
3 authorization as recorded by the content manager computer system.

1 19. The method of Claim 18 wherein the delivery request signal includes the

1 transaction identification data and the delivery authorization token.

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3 20. The method of Claim 19 wherein the delivery request signal is generated in
4 response to selection of a URL by the user wherein the URL specifies the transaction
5 identification data and the delivery authorization token.

1 21. The method of Claim 17 wherein the acknowledgment data is encrypted.

1 22. The method of Claim 1 wherein the delivery request signal is received in the
2 content manager computer system from the client computer system; and

3 further wherein the delivery request signal is generated by the client computer
4 system in response to user-generated control signals.

5 23. The method of Claim 22 wherein the user-generated control signals are incident to
1 a graphical user interface of a web browser; and

2 further wherein the user-generated control signals cause the client computer
3 system to send the delivery request signal to the merchant computer system which in turn
4 communicates the delivery request signal to the content manager computer system.

5 24. The method of Claim 1 wherein the delivery request signal includes the transaction
1 identification data.

2 25. The method of Claim 24 wherein the delivery request signal is generated in
3 response to selection of a URL by the user wherein the URL specifies the transaction
4 identification data.

5 26. The method of Claim 1 wherein the transaction identification data, as received by
1 the delivery computer system is certified as originating from the client computer system.

1 27. The method of Claim 26 wherein the transaction identification data is certified by
2 signing of the transaction identification data using asymmetric-key encryption.

1 28. The method of Claim 1 wherein the digital product includes a digitized audio
2 signal.

1 29. The method of Claim 28 wherein the digital product includes a selection of one or
2 more musical pieces.

1 30. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further includes textual data
2 representing lyrics of the one or more musical pieces.

1 31. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further include textual data
2 representing liner notes of the one or more musical pieces.

1 32. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further include textual data
2 representing artist credits of the one or more musical pieces.

1 33. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further include textual data
2 representing critical commentary of the one or more musical pieces.

1 34. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further includes one or more
2 graphical images of album artwork to accompany the one or more musical pieces.

1 35. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further includes one or more
2 graphical images of advertisement artwork to accompany the one or more musical pieces.

1 36. The method of Claim 35 wherein the advertisement artwork is selected specifically
2 for the client computer system.

1 37. The method of Claim 36 wherein the advertisement artwork is selected specifically
2 for the client computer system in accordance with information of the user of the client computer
3 system.

1 38. The method of Claim 37 wherein the information of the user is demographic.

Sub A2
2 39. A method for conducting electronic commerce through a computer network, the
3 method comprising:

4 receiving, in a merchant computer system of the computer network, a purchase
5 request for a digital product;

6 receiving payment data in the merchant system wherein the payment data specifies
7 remuneration for the digital product;

8 requesting reservation of the digital product from a content manager computer
9 system which can be different from the merchant computer system and which is coupled to
10 the content manager computer system through the computer network;

11 receiving, from the content manager computer system, voucher data which is
12 readable by the content manager computer system and which represents to the content
13 manager computer system a transaction in which the remuneration specified by the
14 payment data is exchanged for the digital product.

1 40. The method of Claim 39 further comprising:

2 receiving, from the content manager computer system, inventory data which
3 specifies available digital products, including the digital product, and specified
4 remuneration to the content manager computer system for each of the available digital
5 products.

1 41. The method of Claim 40 wherein requesting reservation comprises:
2 encrypting data representing a requested reservation;
3 sending the data as encrypted to the content manager computer system; and
4 decrypting the data within the content manager computer system.

1 42. The method of Claim 40 further comprising:
2 sending, from the merchant computer system, the payment data to a payment
3 authority; and
4 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the payment authority, payment
5 authorization data.

1 43. The method of Claim 42 further comprising:
2 sending the payment authorization data to the content manager computer system.

1 44. The method of Claim 43 wherein sending the payment authorization data
comprises:
2 encrypting the payment authorization data.

1 45. The method of Claim 44 further comprising:
2 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the content manager computer
3 system, acknowledgment data which indicates that payment for the digital product has
4 been recorded.

1 46. The method of Claim 45 wherein the acknowledgment data includes the
2 transaction identification data and a payment authorization token which identifies payment
3 authorization as recorded by the content manager computer system.

1 47. The method of Claim 46 wherein the delivery request signal includes the
2 transaction identification data and the payment authorization token.

1 48. The method of Claim 47 wherein the delivery request signal is generated in
2 response to selection of a URL by the user wherein the URL specifies the transaction
3 identification data and the payment authorization token.

1 49. The method of Claim 45 wherein the acknowledgment data is encrypted.

1 50. A method for conducting electronic commerce through a computer network, the
2 method comprising:

3 conducting a purchase phase of a transaction within a first computer system coupled to the
4 computer network wherein the purchase phase includes selection of a digital product for purchase
5 and authorization of payment for the digital product; and

6 conducting a delivery phase of the transaction within a second computer system which is
7 coupled to the first computer system through the computer network wherein the delivery phase
8 includes